

Report on Tibet Negotiations

As Required by

Section 611, Foreign Relations Authorization Act, 2003

"Tibetan Policy Act of 2002"

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I. Executive Summary

The United States is encouraged that the People's Republic of China invited the Dalai Lama's Special Envoy Lodi Gyaltzen Gyari and Envoy Kelsang Gyaltzen to visit Beijing and Tibetan regions of China in September 2002. We urge that such contacts continue, and that substantive dialogue between the Chinese government and the Dalai Lama or his representatives lead to a negotiated settlement on questions related to Tibet.

In public statements and in diplomatic channels, we continue to press both sides to open a dialogue without preconditions. We have consistently maintained that questions surrounding Tibet and its relationship to Chinese authorities in Beijing should be resolved by direct dialogue between the Tibetans and the Chinese. In addition to the visit of the Dalai Lama's Special Envoy Lodi Gyari, we also note a July 2002 visit to Beijing and Tibetan regions of China by the Dalai Lama's elder brother, Gyalo Thondup.

The Dalai Lama can be an asset as China deals with the difficult challenges of regional and national stability. He represents the views of the vast majority of Tibetans and his moral authority helps to unite the Tibetan community inside and outside of China. For China to work with the Dalai Lama or his representatives to resolve problems facing Tibet is in the interest of both the Chinese government and the Tibetan people. At the same time, the lack of resolution of these problems leads to greater tensions inside China and will be a stumbling block to fuller political and economic engagement with the United States and other nations.

II. Tibet Policy

Encouraging substantive dialogue between Beijing and the Dalai Lama is a key objective of this Administration. The United States encourages China and the Dalai Lama to hold substantive discussions aimed at resolution of differences at an early date, without preconditions. We have consistently asserted that any questions surrounding Tibet and its relationship to Chinese authorities should be resolved by direct dialogue between the Tibetans and the Chinese. President Bush, Secretary Powell and other Administration officials at all levels believe that dialogue between China and the Dalai Lama or his representatives will alleviate tensions in Tibetan regions of China.

The United States recognizes the Tibet Autonomous Region--hereinafter referred to as "Tibet"--to be part of the People's Republic of China. This long-standing policy is consistent with the view of the international community. In addition, the Dalai Lama has expressly disclaimed any intention to seek sovereignty or independence for Tibet and has stated that his goal is greater autonomy for Tibetans in China.

Because we do not recognize Tibet as an independent state, the United States does not conduct official diplomatic relations with the Tibetan "government-in-exile" in Dharamsala. However, we maintain contact with representatives of a wide variety of political and other groups inside and outside of China, including with Tibetans in the United States, China, and around the world. Our contacts include meeting with the Dalai Lama in his capacity as an important world spiritual leader and Nobel laureate. It is a sign of our country's respect for the Dalai Lama that the President, the Secretary, and other senior administration officials have met with him on several occasions.

We have consistently urged China to respect the unique religious, linguistic, and cultural heritage of its Tibetan people and to respect fully their human rights and civil liberties.

III. Steps taken by the President and the Secretary to encourage the Government of the People's Republic of China to enter into a dialogue with the Dalai Lama or his representatives leading to a negotiated agreement on Tibet.

A. Steps Taken by the President

Since assuming office in January, 2001, President Bush has met with President Jiang Zemin of the People's Republic of China on three occasions. On each occasion, the President has spoken of the importance of respecting the unique cultural, linguistic, and religious way of life of the Tibetan people and has urged dialogue between the China and the Dalai Lama or his representatives.

The President has twice visited China. In October, 2001, the President attended the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Forum ministerial meeting in Shanghai, and held a bilateral meeting with President Jiang during which he urged the Chinese to initiate dialogue with the Dalai Lama or his representatives. The President visited China again in February, 2002. National Security Adviser Condoleezza Rice, speaking to the press on February 21, noted that President Bush and President Jiang had had an extensive discussion on human rights and religious freedom concerns in China, including in Tibetan regions, and that the President "mentioned specifically the importance of dialogue with the Dalai Lama."

In October, 2002, President Jiang made a state visit to the United States and met with the President on October 25 in Crawford, Texas. The two again discussed Tibet in detail. At a joint press conference later that day, President Bush said, "I also spoke of the importance of respecting human rights in Tibet and encouraged more dialogue with Tibetan leaders."

The President also met with then-Chinese Vice President Hu Jintao in May 2002, during the latter's first official visit to the United States. President Bush raised his concerns about religious freedom in China, including in China's Tibetan regions, and encouraged China to welcome a visit by the Dalai Lama or his representatives. Mr. Hu, who is now both President of China and Secretary General of the Communist Party of China, apparently retains an

interest in Tibetan issues. In the late 1980s, Hu held the highest Party post in the Tibet Autonomous Region, and this February he was elected by the Tibet Autonomous Region delegation as a delegate to the 10th National People's Congress.

On May 23, 2001, President Bush met with the Dalai Lama at the White House. White House Press Spokesman Ari Fleischer noted subsequently that "the President commended the Dalai Lama's commitment to nonviolence and declared his strong support for the Dalai Lama's tireless efforts to initiate a dialogue with the Chinese government. The President said he would seek ways to encourage dialogue and expressed his hope that the Chinese government would respond favorably." In the meeting, the President also reiterated the strong commitment of the United States to support the preservation of Tibet's unique religious, cultural, and linguistic identity and the protection of the human rights of all Tibetans.

B. Steps Taken by the Secretary

Secretary of State Colin Powell and Chinese Foreign Minister Tang Jiaxuan have discussed Tibet on multiple occasions. When the two met in China in July 2001, the Secretary raised concerns about human rights, including in Tibet, during his meetings in Beijing. He pointed out that these issues are important to the American people and to U.S.-China relations. The Secretary also urged the Chinese government to initiate dialogue with the Dalai Lama.

Shortly thereafter, in September 2001, Foreign Minister Tang traveled to Washington and met again with the Secretary. Under Secretary of State for Global Affairs* Paula Dobriansky, the Department's Special Coordinator for Tibetan Issues, was included in the bilateral discussions, which afforded an opportunity to raise concern about Tibet with one of China's most influential leaders.

In April 2002, the Secretary met Chinese Vice President Hu Jintao during his first visit to the United States. Their meeting addressed a number of issues, including human rights and Tibet.

The Secretary again met with Foreign Minister Tang at UN General Assembly in September 2002. There he noted that the U.S. was encouraged by the recent contact between the Dalai Lama's representatives and the Chinese, and urged that the two sides continue to work together on a process for dialogue. During his February 2003 trip to China, the Secretary reiterated this message in his meeting with Foreign Minister Tang.

On May 22, 2001, Secretary Powell and Deputy Secretary Richard Armitage both met with the Dalai Lama. Under Secretary Dobriansky was also present in both meetings, which provided an opportunity to exchange views with the Dalai Lama on the situation in Tibet. Secretary Powell expressed his strong interest in working to protect Tibet's unique cultural, linguistic, and religious heritage and increase respect for religious freedom in Tibet.

C. Steps Taken by Other Department of State Officials

At all levels, in public statements and in private meetings, officials of the Department of State continue to raise with Chinese counterparts the importance of the Tibet issue and to urge that China enter into negotiations with the Dalai Lama or his representatives as soon as possible.

On May 17, 2001, Secretary Powell designated Under Secretary Paula Dobriansky as Special Coordinator for Tibetan Issues, a responsibility in addition to her continuing role as Under Secretary of State for Global Affairs. As the Special Coordinator for Tibetan Issues, Under Secretary Dobriansky's responsibilities include promoting substantive dialogue between the Chinese government and the Dalai Lama or his representatives, maintaining close ties with Congress and nongovernmental organizations with an interest in Tibet, and seeking to assist in preserving the unique cultural, religious, and linguistic heritage of Tibetans. Under Secretary Dobriansky accompanied the President to China on both his trips, and also led a separate delegation to Beijing in April 2002. On all of these occasions, she discussed Tibetan human rights and religious freedom issues in detail, as well as the importance of dialogue between China and the Dalai Lama or his representatives.

In December 2001, Under Secretary Dobriansky traveled to Norway to meet with the Dalai Lama and exchange views. She also held several meetings with counterparts from other countries to solicit their views on the situation in Tibet and the best means to foster dialogue.

On March 7, 2002 in testimony before the House International Relations Committee, Under Secretary Dobriansky discussed widespread human rights abuses in Tibet and also noted that on both his visits to China, President Bush urged Chinese leaders to negotiate directly with the Dalai Lama or his representatives on the grounds that the Dalai Lama's call for "genuine autonomy was sincere." In repeated public statements, the Under Secretary continued, the Dalai Lama has made clear he does not seek independence for Tibet, but rather that Tibetans be given genuine self-rule in order to preserve their civilization and their unique culture, religion, language, and way of life. For this to occur, the Dalai Lama has said it is essential for Tibetans to be able to handle all their domestic affairs and to freely determine their social, economic and cultural development. "The lack of resolution on this issue will be a stumbling block to fuller political and economic engagement with United States and others," Under Secretary Dobriansky concluded.

During his December 2002 trip to China, Deputy Secretary Richard Armitage discussed with Chinese Vice Foreign Minister Li Zhaoxing the visit to China by the Dalai Lama's representatives, and urged that China release Tibetans detained for the peaceful expression of their political and religious views.

Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs James A. Kelly, in testimony before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on May 1, 2001, stated that, "we will continue to focus on Tibet. We are pressing the Chinese government at all levels to end abuses including use of torture, arbitrary interest, detention without public trial or detention for peaceful expression of political religious views." In particular, Assistant Secretary Kelly continued, "we will press for an end to religious restrictions against Tibetan Buddhists. Taking a longer view, we will also work to preserve Tibetan's unique cultural, religious and linguistic heritage. We continue

to urge China to open a dialogue with the Dalai Lama or his representatives."

Assistant Secretary of State for Human Rights, Democracy and Labor Lorne W. Craner discussed problems in Tibet at length in both sessions of the U.S.-China Human Rights Dialogue held since he assumed office. In Washington in October 2001, and in Beijing in December 2002, Assistant Secretary Craner used the human rights forum to raise individual Tibetan cases of concern and to urge dialogue between China and the Dalai Lama or his representatives. He has reiterated these points in several other meetings with senior Chinese officials.

U.S. Ambassador to China Clark T. Randt traveled to Tibet in April 2002. During that trip and at other times, Ambassador Randt has pressed for dialogue between China and the Dalai Lama or his representatives and has raised concerns about threats to the unique cultural, religious and linguistic heritage of Tibetans.

The staff of the U.S. Embassy in Beijing and the U.S. Consulate General in Chengdu travel regularly to Tibet and to Tibetan regions in other provinces of China. U.S. officials have used these trips to ascertain conditions in Tibetan areas and also to urge Chinese authorities to engage in dialogue with the Dalai Lama or his representatives. U.S. officials also follow closely the human rights and religious freedom situation in Tibetan regions and protest instances of abuse of ethnic Tibetans detained for peacefully expressing their political or religious views. Finally, U.S. officials monitor and urge the protection of the unique cultural, religious and linguistic heritage of Tibetans.

IV. Status of any discussions between the People's Republic of China and the Dalai Lama or his representatives.

The last two decades have seen intermittent efforts by the Dalai Lama and the People's Republic of China to reach accommodation through dialogue. During a period of liberalization in Tibet inaugurated in 1980 by then-Secretary General of the Communist Party Hu Yaobang, the Dalai Lama was invited to send several delegations to China to observe conditions in Tibet. Three delegations traveled through Tibetan areas between August 1979 and July 1980. In April 1982, and again in October 1984, high-level Tibetan delegations traveled to Beijing to hold exploratory talks with Chinese officials, but the two sides did not make substantive headway. In 1985, a fourth fact-finding delegation traveled to Tibetan regions of China, but no progress toward substantive negotiations was made.

Contacts between China and the Dalai Lama's representatives were sporadically continued for the next 17 years, with occasional contacts between the Dalai Lama's older brother Gyalo Thondup and officials of the United Front Work Department of the Communist Party of China. However, an open visit by a senior Tibetan figure did not occur again until in July 2002, when China invited Gyalo Thondup to visit Lhasa, Beijing, his family home in Qinghai, and the Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region in northwest China. Upon his return to India, Gyalo Thondup spoke of "great changes inside Tibet including many good roads and significant development in the cities" since his last time in Tibet in 1952. He also expressed optimism over the "great changes in the outlook of the Chinese government" and urged face-to-face talks between Tibetans and Chinese leaders.

In September 2002, the Dalai Lama's Special Envoy Lodi Gyaltsen Gyari and Envoy Kelsang Gyaltsen led a four-member delegation to Lhasa, Shigatse, Chengdu, Shanghai and Beijing. Lodi Gyari later stated that the delegation had two tasks on the trip: "to re-establish direct contact with the leadership in Beijing and to create a conducive atmosphere enabling direct face-to-face meetings on a regular basis in the future; and to explain His Holiness the Dalai Lama's Middle Way Approach towards resolving the

issue of Tibet." In his March 10, 2003 address to the Tibetan people, the Dalai Lama reiterated his commitment to the Middle Way Approach, calling for autonomy for Tibet and not independence from China.

The delegation was accompanied during its travels by a representative of the United Front Work Department, and met with a variety of Tibetan officials. A press statement by Lodi Gyari issued after the visit noted the delegation "was impressed by the dedication and competency" of many Tibetan officials they met and that the delegation admired ongoing efforts at economic modernization. While praising development efforts, the delegation's statement also sought to draw the attention of Tibetan leaders "to the importance of paying equal attention to preserving Tibet's distinct cultural, religious and linguistic heritage." The visit marked the first public travel of Lodi Gyari to China since 1984, when he visited Beijing. It also marked the first formal contact between the Dalai Lama's representatives and China since 1993.

The Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) issued several statements on the visit. In a September 10 briefing, MFA spokesperson Kong Quan stated that the Chinese government had agreed to the visit of a "group of Tibetan expatriates" who will travel to Tibet. The group would visit "in a private capacity" in order to tour and see relatives, and would also have a chance to exchange views with people at all levels. "China welcomes their return and views the visit as an opportunity for the group to observe Tibet's development," Kong continued. "It is also helpful for the expatriates to witness the religious freedom of Tibetans. China believes that in recent years, the Dalai Lama has used support provided by international organizations to engage in separatist activities." Kong stressed that the Dalai Lama must cease those activities and accept that Tibet is a part of China.

On September 17, Kong reiterated that Tibetan "compatriots" were permitted to return to China and Tibet "in a personal capacity." Kong also restated that China will not commence dialogue with the Dalai Lama unless he stops separatist activities and acknowledges the "one China" principle, that Tibet and Taiwan are part of China, and that the People's Republic of China is the only China.

On September 19, Kong again reported that a group of Tibetan "compatriots" traveled in a private capacity to Beijing, Tibet, and other Tibetan related areas. Kong added that there had been no change in China's position on the Dalai Lama.

Department of State Spokesman Richard Boucher noted upon arrival of the Dalai Lama's Envoys in Beijing on September 9 that, "we believe that process of dialogue can resolve long-standing differences and result in greater freedom, including religious freedom for the Tibetan people." He added that this visit is an opportunity to foster mutual understanding, an important first step.

The United States is encouraged that the People's Republic of China invited the Dalai Lama's Special Envoys and his brother to visit Beijing, Lhasa and other parts of China in 2002 and that both sides expressed their hopes for continued dialogue. We urge that such contacts continue, and that substantive dialogue between the Chinese government and the Dalai Lama or his representatives lead quickly to a negotiated settlement on questions related to Tibet.